

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

United States Congress

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Markey Hails Defeat of Nuclear Bunker Buster, Mini-nukes *Appropriations Bill Cuts Funding for Controversial Weapons*

Washington, D.C. – Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Task Force on Nonproliferation, today hailed the decision by Congress to cancel all funding for the nuclear bunker buster warhead, an action which rebuffed the Bush Administration's request for funding to develop a new nuclear warhead that could be used against deeply-buried bunkers or other targets, and a "mini-nuke" warhead for battlefield use.

"The Bush Bunker Buster has finally gone bust," said Rep. Markey, who spearheaded House efforts to kill funding for the controversial programs and was the first in Congress to seek to offer an amendment to cut funding for the warhead's development.

Rep. Markey added, "This is the biggest victory that arms control advocates in Congress have had since 1992, when we were able to place limits on nuclear testing. If we are to convince other countries to forego nuclear weapons, we cannot be preparing to build an entire new generation of nuclear weapons here in the U.S."

Rep. Markey added, "This victory is the culmination of a three-year effort to kill funding for the bunker buster and mini-nukes, and I'm pleased that we've finally succeeded this year. This action by the Congress should send a strong signal to the Bush Administration to drop this weapon from next year's budget request."

The Bush Administration's FY2005 budget request included \$27.6 million to continue study of a "Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, known as the bunker buster, a nuclear weapon intended to destroy deeply buried and hardened targets such as leadership bunkers or chemical and biological weapons caches. The Bush budget request also called for \$9 million for "Advanced Concepts," which funded efforts to develop a small "mini-nuke" for battlefield use. On May 20, 2004, the House narrowly defeated – by a vote of 214-204 -- an amendment offered by Representatives Ellen Taushier (D-CA) and Rep. Markey to cut funding for the program, representing an increase of 5 votes over the margin offered on a similar Tauscher-Markey amendment last year, which was defeated by a vote of 199 to 226, and 32 votes closer than the 172-243 vote on a Markey amendment to kill the program that was offered in May 2002.

Shortly after the May 2004 vote, the House Appropriations Committee moved to cut all funding for the bunker buster and mini-nukes programs. The House approved this recommendation when it passed the House Energy and Water Appropriations bill. The Senate failed to pass a separate Energy and Water

Appropriations bill, forcing the issue to be resolved as part of a giant Omnibus Appropriations bill in a lame duck session.

Rep. Markey concluded, "I think the Appropriators saw the writing on the wall. Each year, our margin has gotten closer and closer. Each year, the Administration's projections of the cost of this program have risen. Finally, we have been able to get over the top. I commend Chairman Hobson and Ranking Member Visclosky for their leadership in pressing this issue."

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